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Dear Marty,

Enclosed is the draft for *Mary Poppins Comes Back*, which Mrs Travers and I have revised: we hope you and the studio will like this revision enough for me to be able to proceed with writing the screenplay.

The following points are ones that Mrs Travers has asked me to convey to you which did not seem properly part of the treatment:

- 1) Mrs Travers is concerned that it should be made clear to Julie Andrews that she will be provided with a stand-in for those sequences involving stunts such as flying.
- 2) The Bird Woman should not be portrayed as old as she was in the first film.
- 3) Mary Poppins should never wear red (as she did in the original movie), and Mrs Travers suggests that the most appropriate colour-scheme for costumes would be muted English shades.

We look forward to hearing your response in due course.

Yours sincerely,




Mary Poppins Comes Back

Revised Treatment
(Draft)

by

P L Travers and Brian Sibley

Mary Poppins Comes Back is set in Edwardian London, a little while after the events depicted in the first film. It tells how the magical nanny returns to the Banks family at number 17 Cherry Tree Lane, helps them resolve the problems in their lives and helps both the children and adults to see the importance of magic, imagination and the spirit of youthfulness.

The film would open in the Banks family's nursery, where **Jane** and **Michael** are reflecting on how different their life has been since Mary Poppins went away.

From a scene of domestic upheaval we learn that the family is facing several problems: **Mrs Winifred Banks** is having to manage without a nanny and, in addition to **Jane** and **Michael**, now has to cope with **Twins (John and Barbara)**; a situation which puts additional burdens on the domestic staff - **Mrs Brill**, the cook, and **Ellen**, the maid.

The father, **George Banks**, is also having problems: as a result of his having invested in a number of unlikely-sounding projects, **The Dawes, Tomes, Mousley, Grubbs, Fidelity-Fiduciary Bank** is now in serious financial trouble with too much of its money tied up in investments, insufficient funds in hand and a lack of confidence among depositors. Mr Banks might defend his actions in a song in which he explains that men of foresight are seldom acknowledged in their own time.

However, as the Bank's chairman, the younger **Mr Dawes** explains, if they should happen to come under the scrutiny of investigators, they may well have to cease trading. George Banks is depressed by this situation and seems to have forgotten the things he learnt from Mary Poppins first visit.

During the chaos at number 17, an antique vase gets broken. Because the vase (which had been left to Mr Banks by his Aunt Euphemia) is extremely valuable, Mrs Banks is too frightened to tell her husband about the accident and hides the vase away.

When Mr Banks returns home, Jane and Michael ask their father to help them fly their kite, but - without meaning to be bad-tempered (for he is at heart a kind man) - he is so weighed down with his concerns about the Bank that he testily tells them he doesn't have time.

In the nursery, Jane and Michael talk together about why everything seems to be going wrong and decide it is because Mary Poppins is not there - things always went right when she was around. But what, they wonder, can they do about it? Gazing out of the window they suddenly see the **Bird Woman** who appears to send one of her birds up to them. They tell it that they need Mary Poppins and the bird returns to the old lady who, after listening for a moments, sends it flying away.

The following morning, Jane and Michael are sitting on their front door step with their kite, when **Barney**, the ice-cream man, comes by with his cart (which might also be a hurdy-gurdy) and offers to help them fly their kite in the park.

[Barney's role is to act as a 'pointer' to Mary Poppins, her wisdom and her magic. His relationship with her is that of a friend (but not a romantic one) and he must never himself be the instigator of magic - that being solely the province of Mary Poppins and her relatives.]

On their way to the park they meet **Constable Jones** and the family's neighbours, **Admiral Boom** and **Miss Lark** (accompanied by her pampered little dog, **Andrew**). Barney and the others could be introduced through a song about the different varieties of ice-creams which the various characters prefer. Jane and Michael might ask each of them for advice on how to find Mary Poppins.

In the park, Barney, Jane and Michael send up their kite, but what comes down again is not what they expect - for holding onto the end of the kite-string is **Mary Poppins**.

Mary Poppins returns home with the children. On the way, there might be the first of a series of comic episodes involving Miss Lark's dog Andrew and his disreputable canine friend, **Willoughby**.

At number 17, after meeting Mr and Mrs Banks once more, Mary Poppins reestablishes her domain in the nursery, putting things back the way she likes them, and greeting her old friend Dapple, the rocking-horse (who might give a neigh of pleasure on seeing her).

Then Mary Poppins unpacks her remarkable carpet-bag, takes Jane and Michael's temperature with her magic thermometer (to see how they have been behaving in her absence), meets the Twins and, in a possible musical number, shows the children that 'The whole world is made of music.'

Michael asks Mary Poppins to promise never to go away again, but all she will say is that she will stay 'till the door opens'. Jane points out that that the nursery door is *always* opening, but Mary Poppins enigmatically announces that she means *The Other Door...*

Next day, Mary Poppins takes Jane and Michael shopping and (following the second possible Miss Lark episode) they visit Mrs Corry's sweetshop, where they meet the curious old lady confectioner and her daughters, Miss Annie and Miss Fannie. Mrs Corry shows the children her magical recipe-book from which, for hundreds of years, she has made the sweets that have been enjoyed by Kings, Queen and Presidents (some of whom might possibly come alive to entertain the children). Afterwards, Mary Poppins buys gingerbread cakes decorated with shining foil stars.

Meanwhile, at the Bank, Theophilus Scrimper (Chief Inspector of Banks) and his shifty assistant, Samuel Muggins have been examining the books and give Mr Dawes and his fellow directors an ultimatum: by a set deadline they must have raised sufficient cash through guarantees and new investments or the bank will have to close.

That night, Jane and Michael look out of the nursery window and watch as Mary Poppins and Mrs Corry (assisted by Miss Annie and Miss Fannie), past the stars from their gingerbread onto the night sky.

The next morning, Jane and Michael go to tell their father about the amazing scene they had witnessed the previous evening. But Mr Banks interrupts what he considers a nonsensical story, and explains the seriousness of the situation facing the family.

Mr Banks tells his wife and children that they have got to face facts: economies will have to be made and things will have to be sold - such as Aunt Euphemia's vase. Mrs Banks has to confess that it has been broken and Mr Banks gets very angry, but Mary Poppins saves the situation by offering to take it to her cousin, **Mr Turvy**, who is an expert repairer.

On the way, the children could see the last episode being played-out of the drama involving Miss Lark, Andrew and Willoughby. At Mr Turvy's, Jane and Michael meet Mary Poppins' cousin and his wife, **Topsy Turvy** with whom they have lots of upside-down fun, including a topsy-turvy song. Whilst repairing the vase, Mr Turvy discovers a toy drummer-boy inside, and - when he hears its magical 'Rat-a-tat-tat' music - remembers how (as a boy) he had just such a toy himself.

Michael wants to know whose toy it is, but all Mary Poppins will say is that it belongs to 'another little boy'. Michael is allowed to keep the toy until the boy to whom it belongs needs it again. He promises to look after the drummer-boy, to which Mary Poppins replies, 'You may try...

On leaving the Turvys, Mary Poppins and the children meet the **Balloon Woman** who allows them to choose from the uninflated balloons she is selling. When their balloons are blown up, each has the recipient's name on it. Being magical, the balloons lift Mary Poppins, Jane and Michael off the ground and begin to carry them home.

On the way, as they are crossing the River Thames, Michael - who keeps twisting and turning - accidentally drops the toy drummer-boy. Fortunately the toy is not lost; but, after this mishap, Michael decides the toy would be safer if it were placed back inside the vase. Then they all continue on their journey and return home.

Outside number 17, they find Miss Lark (the dogs) and assorted neighbours watching as a FOR SALE sign goes up. Inside, Mrs Banks and the domestics are desperately upset because the Bank Inspector has sent his assistant to assess the value of the Banks' home.

In the nursery, Jane and Michael find Muggins valuing their toys. With the assistance of some Poppins magic the toys come to life and get rid of Muggins. He is about to leave the house in anger when he sees the antique vase standing in the hall.

Realising the vase's value, Muggins is examining it when Mr Banks returns home. Muggins tells Banks that the vase is the only item of real value in the house and Banks is so defeated that he tells him to take it and be gone. Because the drummer-boy is still inside the vase, Michael tries to stop this happening, but his protests fall on deaf ears.

Muggins departs with the vase but, as he walks down the street, he hears something rattling. Turning the vase upside-down he finds the drummer-boy, which - since he believes it to be worthless - he throws carelessly into the gutter where it rolls and disappears down a drain. We might then follow its fate as, watched by rats, the little toy floats through a sewer before plunging into the river from a outlet pipe; there it might be caught in the turmoil caused by the propeller-shaft of a passing tug and disappear from view.

In the nursery, Jane and Michael might be worrying about having to leave their home, and Mary Poppins could help the children understand that there is more to a home than just a house. Jane and Michael might then ask Mary Poppins where her home is to which she would reply: 'I am at home wherever I am!'

When they ask what is going to happen, Mary Poppins her usual enigmatic self, but she does help the children see that their father was (and, in a sense, still is) a child and as much in need of love, understanding, fun and imagination as they are.

The next morning the children get out of bed on the wrong side and are gloomy because they still feel somewhat distanced from their father and because they have lost the drummer-boy. Their mood might be reflected in a song for Mary Poppins about the 'Right Side and the Wrong Side'. But the children are not only sad, they seem to be questioning their belief in the magical power of the imagination.

When Michael bemoans the loss of the drummer-boy, Mary Poppins tries to cheer him up, telling him: 'All that's lost is somewhere,' and that 'Nothing can fall out of the universe.' Michael wants to know whether they will ever find the toy again, to which Mary Poppins might reply: 'You will find it in the last place you look.'

Because Mrs Banks wants to prevent the children from witnessing any further upheavals (and would, anyway, rather they weren't underfoot), she asks Mary Poppins to take Jane and Michael to the Park. There they find a magic compass and joined by Barney, who invites himself along, they set off round the world.

On their journey, they go to the four points of the compass with the following possible scenarios: in the North they visit **Seals and Walruses** at the North Pole (possibly taking part in the North Pole Polka); in the South they meet a **Cockatoo**; in the East they encounter an ancient Chinese **Panda** and in the West they visit a Polynesian island where they meet a **Dolphin**.

Each of the animals give the children a keepsake with which to remember their visit. And in the West, the Dolphin shows them a beach where all the things that are lost in the world are eventually washed ashore. There they find the lost drummer-boy and taking it and their souvenirs, they return home to Cherry Tree Lane.

Jane and Michael go straight to their father to tell him all about their extraordinary adventure, but he refuses to listen to such nonsense and dismisses their story even though they try to show him their mementos. As a result they never get round to telling him about the drummer-boy.

Mary Poppins sends the children on to bed and has a conversation with Mr Banks, during which she makes him see that he needs fun and imagination in his life every bit as much as his children do; and reminds him (preferably through asking questions rather than making statements) that when he was young he also understood and enjoyed such things. Mary Poppins leaves Mr Banks thinking over these things.

In the nursery, she might sing the children a lullaby to which the drummer-boy provides a musical accompaniment. Downstairs, Mr Banks hears a 'Rat-a-tat-tat' - a noise that is both familiar and yet long-forgotten - and he begins to wonder...

Next day at the Bank, Scrimper and Muggins assess the financial situation and find that Dawes and his colleagues have failed to meet the demands required of them. The Bank will, therefore, have to close.

At number 17, the children make an important discovery: among the things that have been sorted through in the process of looking for saleable items are several old portraits - one of which shows a little boy in old-fashioned clothes holding a toy drummer-boy.

Seeing this portrait, Jane and Michael realise that the picture is of their father and that he is the 'other little boy' to whom the toy drummer belongs. They are astonished by the realisation that their father ever was a boy...

Then the children discuss what to do: at first Michael is reluctant to give up the toy, having become fond of it himself, but Jane helps him see that their father needs it. Together they tell Mary Poppins that they have to go to see their father at the Bank.

Meanwhile, at the Bank, the family's friends and neighbours have come to try and help. Among those there would be Mrs Corry (with a bag of her magical stars), Miss Annie and Miss Fannie, Barney, Admiral Boom, Miss Lark (and her dogs), Constable Jones, Mr and Mrs Turvy, the Bird Woman and the Balloon Woman. However, Scrimper dismisses all their gifts and contributions as worthless.

At this point Mary Poppins arrives with the children. Jane and Michael give Mr Banks the drummer-boy and he at once begins to remember his childhood. Then the toy starts to work and as it plays its 'Rat-a-tat-tat' music, the sound has a powerful effect on its former owner.

Mr Banks undergoes a dramatic change and his transformation, in turn, begins to have an effect first on Scrimper, then on Muggins, Dawes and the other banker. Soon all of them are caught up in the magic.

Encouraged by Mr Banks, Mary Poppins turns the Bank into a place of musical extravaganza, with staff and customers taking part in an elaborate song and dance routine that spills over from the bank onto the London streets, where these activities attract the attention of various businessmen and city dignitaries (such as the Prime Minister and the Lord Mayor) are drawn into the fun - receiving balloons from the Balloon Woman - and who decide to invest in the Bank. Mary Poppins and Scrimper might have a scene together here in which they dance.

If possible, during this sequence, it should be shown that one of Mr Banks' seemingly visionary investments, with which the story began, has proved successful.

Mrs Banks arrives with the Twins and joins her husband and children in the celebrations. Eventually, Mary Poppins says goodbye to her relations and to Barney (who gives her a small nosegay of flowers), and leaves with the Twins. Jane and Michael (who assume from the farewells that Mary Poppins' relations are all going away), decide to stay with their parents rather than go home with Mary Poppins.

At number 17 Cherry Tree Lane, Mary Poppins prepares to leave, placing a flower from Barney's bouquet on Jane and Michael's pillows and saying an affectionate good-bye to Dapple (who magically sheds a tear). She might comfort the rocking-horse by hinting that she may one day return again. Finally she is ready to depart when she sees the Banks family, now happily reunited with one another, coming down the Lane.

Outside, the children suddenly see - on the wall of a neighbouring house, shadows cast by the nursery fire: there is Mary Poppins moving about in *another* nursery; and *another nursery* will have *another door* - the Other Door.

Realising that it is Mary Poppins who is going away, Jane and Michael rush indoors and upstairs to the nursery.

But there is no sign of Mary Poppins. There is, however, the Other Room reflected on the surface of the window which, with night falling outside, is transformed into a mirror. In the shining room of that reflection they can see everything that is in the real nursery.

And there, too, is the Other Door, exactly the same as the one behind them. Beside it stand their own reflections and towards it comes the figure of Mary Poppins with her umbrella and carpet-bag. She opens the door, beyond which appears to be nothing but the night sky.

Opening her umbrella, she steps out into the night. In the street below, Barney looks up and, seeing Mary Poppins, tips his cap to her.

Inside, the parents join their children, and Mr Banks gives Michael the toy drummer-boy: telling him to take better care of it than he did. Then the family watch - and make wishes - as a shooting star streaks across the sky.

Realising that the star is really Mary Poppins, Jane and Michael could tell their father that they know all about the star to which he might good-naturedly reply, 'Why do my children always think they know more than I do?'

When Jane and Michael make their wish it is that they will never forget Mary Poppins and that, one day, she will come back again...

P. L. Travers

Brian Sibley

25 July 1989